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ABSTRACT

This book discusses the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the nation's largest teacher unions. Chapter 1 introduces the book. Chapter 2 discusses the emergence of teacher unionization, especially since the 1960s. Chapter 3 explains the NEA/AFT political and social agendas and their main objectives. Chapter 4 discusses the way NEA/AFT objectives are implemented through collective bargaining. Chapter 5 is devoted to NEA/AFT political operations at the national level. This chapter documents the interaction of union political and bargaining objectives and the way union objectives affect political preferences. Chapter 6 examines NEA/AFT political operations at the state and local levels. Chapter 7 analyzes NEA/AFT opposition to contracting out by school boards. Chapter 8 discusses the compensation of union staff. Chapter 9 tracks union revenues, noting that representing teachers is a billion dollar industry. Chapter 10 challenges the distinction between collective bargaining and political action, discussing teachers' rights to disassociate from union policies and programs. Chapter 11 explains the unique role of AFT President Albert Shanker. Chapter 12 discusses the impact of teacher unions on teacher welfare and student achievement, noting unintended consequences of unionization such as the effects on PTAs. Chapter 13 looks at the likelihood of an NEA/AFT merger and affiliation with the AFL-CIO. Chapter 14 assesses how teachers, parents, and citizens can address issues raised throughout the book. (SM)

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